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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4331
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2143
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2008
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2579
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2920

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 001258

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN AND NEA/IR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/23/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [IR](#) [PK](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: PAKISTANI DIPLOMAT SHARES HIS VIEWS
ON IRAN

Classified By: Classified by Charge Sylvia Reed Curran, Reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d)

11. (C) In a recent conversation with emboff, a senior Pakistan Embassy diplomat described his country as having had an "up and down" relationship with Iran for the last 20 years. He called Iranians "difficult people", and said Pakistan's relations with them were at a low during the years prior to 2001, when Pakistan supported the Taliban. More recently, he said, Iran was more and more uncomfortable with Pakistan's relationship with the U.S., and mentioned recent reports of Iran's own support to the Taliban, calling it a case of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." He said that in addition to its Embassy in Teheran, Pakistan maintains consulates in Zahedan, Bandar Abbas, and Mashad. The Consul from Mashad, whose son is a university student in the United States, reportedly visits Ashgabat from time to time.

12. (C) The diplomat said that Pakistan wants to maintain cordial relations with Iran because of the large numbers of Pakistani Shias who make pilgrimages to the Shia holy sites there. Thousands visit the shrine of Imam Ali Reza in Mashad and must seek Iranian visas. He said that he recently drove to Mashad from Ashgabat for a visit and while there, learned that there are approximately 10,000 Pakistani nationals residing in the Mashad area alone. He said that they had all traveled to the city at various times for the religious pilgrimage, but stayed on and found jobs in Iran. Many had married Iranian women and settled quasi-permanently in the country.

3.. (C) COMMENT: Emboff's conversation was revealing of Pakistani attitudes towards Iran. We will continue to pursue other sources as we explore Iran's relations with its neighbors in the region. END COMMENT.
CURRAN